

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1691

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, XF

SUBJECT: SYRIA AND PLO SPLIT TACKS ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES

COMING TO SC

REF: USUN 1533

1. SUMMARY. ARAB ATTENTION HERE IS FOCUSED ON FORTHCOMING SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF UNDOF AND PALESTINE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS, WITH DIVERGENT ATTITUDES OF PLO AND SYRIA OFTEN BREAKING SURFACE. SYRIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, CONTINUE TO TALK TOUGH ABOUT UNDOF; PLO, ON OTHER HAND, SHOWS SIGNS OF LOOKING FOR WAYS TO AVOID SC CONFRONTATION OVER PALESTINE COMMITTEE REPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. PLO AND SYRIAN UN DELEGATIONS, REFLECTING UNEASY RELATIONSHIP IN LEBANON, ARE FREQUENTLY AT ODDS OVER HOW TO APPROACH FORTHCOMING SC MIDDLE EAST DEBATES. SHARPEST DISAGREEMENT
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IS OVER SYRIAN DEL'S CONTINUING INSISTENCE THAT PALESTINE

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS BE TIED TO EXTENSION OF UNDOF. PLO OBSERVER TERZI HAS MADE IT PLAIN TO MEMBERS OF PALESTINE COMMITTEE AND VARIOUS SC DELS THAT ANY SUCH LINKAGE IS UNACCEPTABLE. IN THIS HE IS ACTIVELY SUPPORTED BY EGYPT AND, APPARENTLY, BY MOST NON-ALIGNED COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

3. ON OTHER ISSUES, PLO AND SYRIA HAVE GONE THEIR SEPARATE WAYS BUT WITH LESS PUBLIC ACRIMONY. IN PALESTINE COMMITTEE, FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER HEATED EXCHANGES IN SOME EARLY MEETINGS (USUN 857), SYRIA SEEMS TO HAVE LEFT FIELD LARGELY TO PLO. SAME PATTERN HAS EVIDENTLY OBTAINED IN ARAB GROUP MEETINGS THAT PLO HAS CALLED TO CONSIDER CONVENING SC ON EXPULSION OF WEST BANK POLITICIANS, ISRAELI LAND DEALS, ETC. INITIALLY, SYRIAN AMB ALLAF VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED PLO INITIATIVES; MORE RECENTLY HIS POSITION HAS BEEN THAT SYRIA WOULD ACQUIESCE IN WHATEVER ACTION ARAB MAJORITY CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE. (TERZI HAS TOLD SC MEMBERS THAT HE HAS ACTED IN THESE MATTERS ALMOST ENTIRELY WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, OWING TO PLO LEADERSHIP'S PREOCCUPATION WITH LEBANESE CRISIS.)

4. MEANWHILE, PALESTINE COMMITTEE DRAFTING GROUP (REFTEL) HAS BEEN MEETING WITH OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND HAS TURNED OUT SEVERAL DRAFTS OF ITS REPORT. MOST RECENT VERSION CONTAINS ELEMENT THAT WE FIND MOST INTRIGUING. THIS IS AN INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE THAT EMPLOYS US PHRASEOLOGY ON PALESTINE QUESTION--VIRTUALLY SAME PHRASEOLOGY THAT ARABS REJECTED DURING JANUARY PALESTINE DEBATE. SENTENCE READS: "THE COMMITTEE DEEMS IT NECESSARY TO STRESS ITS BELIEF THAT NO SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST CAN BE ENVISAGED WHICH DOES NOT FULLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." EGYPTIANS TELL US THAT RAPPORTEUR (MALTA) CONSULTED PLO ON THIS PARTICULAR SENTENCE, AND THAT PLO AGREED TO ITS INCLUSION. (FULL TEXT OF DRAFT, ANNOTATED TO INDICATE PORTIONS PROBABLY ACCEPTABLE TO USG, BEING POUCHED UNP/OAKLEY.)

5. COMMENT: IT IS JUST POSSIBLE PLO MAY BE LOOKING FOR WORDING ACCEPTABLE TO THE US THAT COULD BE USED IN SC RESOLUTION THIS JUNE TAKING NOTE OF PALESTINE COMMITTEE CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORT. CERTAINLY, REPORTS HAVE REACHED US THAT PLO BADLY WANTS COUNCIL TO ADOPT A PALESTINE-RELATED RESOLUTION - AND THAT IT BELIEVES IT MISSED A BET ON LAST MONTH'S VETOED RESOLUTION. SOMEWHAT INCONSISTENTLY, TERZI OBSERVED TO UK DEL THAT SC MIGHT NOT NEED TO ADOPT ANY RESOLUTION FOLLOWING ITS CONSIDERATION OF PALESTINE COMMITTEE REPORT.

6. FROM US STANDPOINT, A DEBATE ON PALESTINE WITH NO

RESOLUTION IS CLEARLY THE SAFER COURSE. IT WOULD AVOID
INEVITABLE ARAB/NON-ALIGNED EFFORTS TO EMBODY IN A RESOLUTION
UNACCEPTABLE ELEMENTS OF PALESTINE COMMITTEE REPORT. AT SAME
TIME, EVIDENT PLO DESIRE FOR POSITIVE SC ACTION IS WORTH
WATCHING, AND POSSIBLE EXPLOITING, DURING BOTH MIDDLE
EAST DEBATES AHEAD. END COMMENT.
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